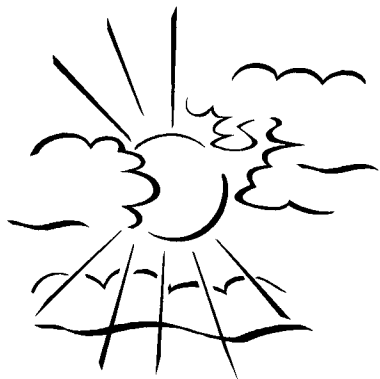


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*Important story at this spot

Articles in Today's Clips

Tuesday, August 30, 2005

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

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Aug 30, 10:35 AM EDT

Poverty Rate Rises to 12.7 Percent

By JENNIFER C. KERR
Associated Press Writer

The nation's poverty rate rose to 12.7 percent of the population last year, the fourth consecutive annual increase, the Census Bureau said Tuesday.

The percentage of people without health insurance did not change.

Overall, there were 37 million people living in poverty, up 1.1 million people from 2003.

Asians were the only ethnic group to show a decline in poverty - from 11.8 percent in 2003 to 9.8 percent last year. The poverty rate among the elderly declined as well, from 10.2 percent in 2003 to 9.8 percent last year.

The last decline in overall poverty was in 2000, when 31.1 million people lived under the threshold - 11.3 percent of the population.

The number of people without health insurance grew from 45 million to 45.8 million. At the same time, the number of people with health insurance coverage grew by 2 million last year.

The median household income, meanwhile, stood at \$44,389, unchanged from 2003. Among racial and ethnic groups blacks had the lowest median income and Asians the highest. Median income refers to the point at which half of households earn more and half earn less.

Regionally, income declined only in the Midwest, down 2.8 percent to \$44,657. The South was the poorest region and the Northeast and the West had the highest median incomes.

The increase in poverty came despite strong economic growth, which helped create 2.2 million jobs last year.

Sheldon Danziger, co-director of the National Poverty Center at the University of Michigan, said the poverty number is still much better than the 80s and early 90s.

"The good news is that poverty is a lot lower than it was in 1993, but we went through a hell of an economic boom," Danziger said. "Nobody is predicting we're going to go through another economic boom like that."

The poverty threshold differs by the size and makeup of a household. For instance, a family of four with two children was considered living in poverty if income was \$19,157 or less. For a family of two with no children, it was \$12,649. For a person 65 and over living alone, it was 9,060.

The estimates on poverty, uninsured and income are based on supplements to the bureau's Current Population Survey, and are conducted over three months, beginning in February, at about 100,000 households nationwide.

Census Bureau: <http://www.census.gov>

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House dream turns into nightmare

Tuesday, August 30, 2005

By Nate Reens
The Grand Rapids Press

ROCKFORD -- For three months, Jeff Kaminski worked overtime so he and his girlfriend, Amy McConnell, could buy the house next door to their Rockford rental.

The couple packed boxes and bags in anticipation of closing on the 361 Adolph St. house Thursday and moving during Labor Day weekend.

Now, their lives are in upheaval after police told them they were scammed and the state program that was to pay for their closing costs, a 5 percent down payment and a year's worth of home insurance never existed.

Kaminski, 28, and McConnell, 25, say their neighbor, Jennifer Dells, who worked for the state Department of Human Services, sold them on the fraudulent program while speaking to them on the phone, never letting on her actual identity.

Dells owned the home and allegedly set up the phony program so she could sell it, police told the couple.

"It seemed too perfect, and turns out it was," Kaminski said. "We broke our lease because that's been our dream -- to own a house of our own."

Kaminski said Dells, who apparently got the couple's information through records while working for the state, sent them checks for \$6,500, saying they were state grants.

The couple has returned uncashed checks totaling \$4,500 but had cashed a \$2,000 check, using some of the money for an appraisal and other expenses, McConnell said. A state investigator told them they likely would have to pay that back, also, she said.

"When you're talking to a state worker on the phone and then you get checks signed by (Gov.) Jennifer Granholm, why would you think anything was up?" Kaminski said.

Dells apparently got information about the couple through a state health insurance program for their children.

Kaminski said investigators came knocking last Wednesday. He took Thursday and Friday off to try to sort out the mess, which took another turn when Dells allegedly told police Kaminski threatened to hurt Dells' 5-month-old child if she did not help him.

Dells, 23, was arraigned Thursday on a charge of filing a false report of a felony, jail records show. She was released from jail the same day on a \$2,000 bond.

Rockford Police Chief Dave Jones said the false report charge stems from her claims that Kaminski threatened her child. He said state officials are investigating the fraud allegations.

Dells could not be reached for comment.

Kaminski is unsure where he and his family will move. Relatives have offered assistance, but there isn't enough time or money to buy another house.

Rockford couple scammed by neighbor who works for the state

By Rachael Ruiz
WOOD-TV

(Rockford, August 29, 2005, 6:13 p.m.) Their dream of owning a home was dashed. But a Rockford couple says that's nothing compared to the deception leading up to the disappointment. They say a woman working for the state offered to help them buy a home through a new program. But it appears the woman was really looking out for her own interests.

"We got our hopes, just smashed," says Amy McConnell.

She says she thought her family of four would be trading up. McConnell and her boyfriend, Jeffrey Kaminski, now rent a gray colored home in Rockford. But they got an opportunity to buy the pretty blue one next door. The dream started with a phone call from a new caseworker from the Michigan Department of Human Services.

"She was looking over our information and noticed we paid \$700 a month in rent and that we qualified for a special grant through the state of Michigan. She wanted to know if we wanted to be homeowners," says McConnell.

The caseworker, Jennifer Dells, specified two homes in particular - a trailer in Sparta and a home on Adolph Street in Rockford. That happened to be the house next door to McConnell's.

"She said that the state of Michigan would pay for all of our closing costs and five percent down," says McConnell.

She soon started getting checks from the state. They also set a closing date for the house on Adolph. But then last week, she got a visit from state investigators from the Office of the Inspector General.

That's when they learned that the new state program to help them buy a home didn't exist. They also had to return \$6,500 in state checks issued to them by Jennifer Dells.

Then, another shocker. Investigators told them that caseworker, Jennifer Dells, owns the home next door. McConnell admits she'd only talked to Dells on the phone and never met the sellers of the house.

Worse yet, when trying to explain why she scammed the couple, Amy says Dells told police a lie about Amy's boyfriend. "That he said he would make her five-month-old baby disappear if she didn't (sell the home to us), which is totally untrue," says McConnell.

That untrue statement landed Dells in jail for filing a false police report. An investigation into her alleged wrongdoing is being handled by the police and the state.

As of last Friday, Dells was suspended from her job without pay. The state would make no other comments about the investigation. Meantime, McConnell's family had already told their landlord they were moving out. They're now scrambling for a place to live.

Mom held after child abandoned, police say

Charges to be requested today

August 30, 2005

BY TALIA BUFORD
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

A woman was in custody Monday night after police said she left her daughter with a Lincoln Park motel housekeeper on Friday, then disappeared.

Police said they planned to contact the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office today about pressing child-abandonment charges against the woman, whose name was not released.

The child, who is about 3, was in protective custody with the Family Independence Agency on Monday night, said Detective William Sant'Angelo of the Lincoln Park Police Department.

Around 11 p.m. Sunday, a housekeeper at the Lamplighter Motel, 883 Dix Hwy., called police to report an abandoned child. The child's mother had asked the woman to watch her for a couple of hours around 9 p.m. Friday, but then did not return, according to police reports.

By Sunday night, the woman called Lincoln Park police. The mother was not staying at the motel, but worked as a part-time exotic dancer at the Atlantis Lounge, which is adjacent to the motel.

According to police reports, the housekeeper was unsure of the mother's and child's names but said Majestic could be the mother's stage name and that Star might be the baby's name. . On Monday morning, police tried to find the mother, releasing the child's picture and possible names via the news media.

Sant'Angelo said the mother's friends and family alerted her to the media coverage. She called police Monday afternoon and came to the station, where she was arrested.

Police, who questioned the mother, would not release specifics about why she did not return for her child, but Sant'Angelo said the information from the interview was enough to make an arrest.

Police did not release the names of the child and mother, but said neither matched the ones provided by the housekeeper.

"It was all we had, and it was enough to get us through," Sant'Angelo said. "The picture is where we got our best source of information."

Child Left With Cleaning Lady At Local Motel

Police Ask For Public's Help In Identifying Girl

POSTED: 12:17 pm EDT August 29, 2005

LINCOLN PARK, Mich. -- A girl believed to be about 3 years old was left in the care of a cleaning lady at a local motel, Local 4 reported.

The mother of the child left her with a housekeeper at a motel at 883 Dix in Lincoln Park. The woman apparently said she'd be back in a few hours, but never returned, according to police. Police said the cleaning lady watched the child for a couple of days before contacting authorities. The child has been placed in protective custody, but has not been able to give police any clues as to what her name is or where her mother may be, the station reported.

The housekeeper told police that the girl goes by the nickname or name Star and her mother may be an exotic dancer known as Majestic.

Police are asking for the public's help in the case.

"What our department is looking for is any type of assistance in identifying either the child, the mother or both," said Chief Thomas Karnes, of the Lincoln Park Police Department.

Karnes said the child showed no signs of neglect.

Anyone with information about the girl or her mother has been asked to call Lincoln Park police at (313) 381-8378.

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'Amber Alert' issued for girl, 5

Tuesday, August 30, 2005
Muskegon Chronicle

FROM LOCAL REPORTS

An Amber Alert has been issued for a 5-year-old Muskegon girl who was last seen about 3 a.m. today, and who is believed to be in the company of a family acquaintance.

Muskegon police identified the girl as Lamiya Amber Balogh, of 723 Louis. She is biracial and has brown hair and brown eyes. She is 4 feet tall, weighs 65 pounds and was last seen wearing gray sweatpants and a white tank top.

Detective Sgt. Monica Shirey said the child's mother last saw her about 3 a.m., and then went to bed. The mother woke up about 3:45 a.m. to the sound of a car leaving the residence.

The child and 17-year-old Shelby Rae-Keith Smith, who had been visiting, were both gone, Shirey said.

The teenager and child may be in a red Pontiac Grand Am, according to police. It was unknown as of 9 a.m. today where that car might be headed, Shirey said.

Missing N.C. Child May Have Been Lured Away By Sex Offender

POSTED: 6:14 am EDT August 30, 2005

UPDATED: 6:43 am EDT August 30, 2005

MONTGOMERY, Ala. -- A 12-year-old girl is missing in North Carolina and police say they're concerned she may be with a convicted sex offender.

Jodie Collie was last seen at her home in Rocky Mount, N.C., Thursday night. There was no sign of a struggle, and relatives said she left a note saying goodbye.

But, authorities in Alabama said Jodie may be in "extreme danger" and are seeking the public's help. Police think she was lured away by 27-year-old sex offender Phillip Daniel Denkler, who served a prison sentence for taking indecent liberties with a child. The two apparently had talked by telephone for months.

The girl's mother says she knew of Denkler, but no one in the family was aware of his criminal record or that he had been in touch with Jodie.

A felony kidnapping warrant was issued for Denkler on Aug. 26.

Jodie is a 5-foot-4, 114 pound white girl with blonde hair and green eyes. Denkler was described as a 6-foot-1, 150 pound white man with short black hair and brown eyes. A police photograph released as part of an Amber Alert showed him wearing glasses and a light mustache.

A police alert said the pair may be in a 2005 beige Hyundai Sonata with North Carolina license plates NWN2630 or PSA2000.

Anyone with information can contact the Rocky Mount police at 252-972-1411, the FBI in Charlotte, N.C., at 704-377-9200, or the Alabama Department of Public Safety at 334-242-4128.

Pneumonia ruled cause of death

Tuesday, August 30, 2005

The Grand Rapids Press

SOLON TOWNSHIP -- A 5-year-old boy who died in his sleep Aug. 24 while camping with his family died of complications from pneumonia, a Kent County medical examiner found. Alexander Henry-Clarence Chapin was found by his family at the Duke Creek Campgrounds. His parents, Mike and Linda Kay Chapin, told authorities the child had been ill most of the week with a high fever. The family, from Texas, had been camping there while looking at real estate in the Greenville area. Kent County sheriff's spokesman Sgt. Roger Parent said there was nothing suspicious about the death.

Phone predator targets teens, youth

Tuesday, August 30, 2005

By Salina Ali sali@citpat.com -- 768-4927

The Springport Police Department, Michigan State Police and Planned Parenthood Mid-Michigan Alliance are warning parents to be alert for fraudulent phone calls from a possible sexual predator who is calling teens and youth in Jackson County.

Five families have been contacted in the past three weeks by a woman posing as a Planned Parenthood employee named Michelle, who asked to speak to the girls about sexual health issues.

"The caller asks for the kids by their name," said Lori Lamerand, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood. "One was even called twice by the person."

Calls were made to families in Jackson, one in Parma and one in Springport, Lamerand said.

"We initially thought it was part of a prank, but after speaking with police we became concerned," Lamerand said.

The Springport family initially wanted to file a complaint against Planned Parenthood and contacted Springport Police Chief Michael Speese.

Speese said these types of calls are usually the work of a sexual predator.

"None of these girls knew each other and they're all different ages. There's no connection," he said. "That's where our concern comes in."

The youngest girl was 9 and the oldest 15.

Speese said that except for one case the girls never spoke with the suspect because the calls were intercepted by parents. The suspect did make contact with the 9-year-old girl but did not make any obscene comments, Lamerand said.

"Most kids answer the phone so somebody's probably made contact with the kids somewhere," Speese said. "We want them to call in if they've been contacted."

Hearing delayed for officer charged with sex crimes

Trace Christenson
The Enquirer

A day in court for an Albion police officer charged with sex crimes was postponed Monday. Kyle Chaney was scheduled to appear for a preliminary examination in Calhoun County District Court but the hearing was adjourned until Sept. 7 after his attorney asked for a delay. Attorney Mark Webb of Marshall told Judge Samuel Durham that he had just been hired by Chaney and had not had time to review police reports and other documents in the case. Chris Johnson, an assistant Kalamazoo County prosecutor assigned to the case, did not oppose the motion. She was assigned after the Calhoun County prosecutor's office asked to withdraw from the case because they have worked with Chaney and Albion police. Chaney, 39, is charged with producing child sexually abusive material, possession of child sexually abusive material, accosting a child for immoral purposes and second-degree child abuse. He faces up to 20 years in prison if convicted. He was arraigned on the charges Aug. 20 after an investigation by the sheriff's department. Prosecutors have alleged the illegal activities occurred between June 1, 2004, and this month. The charges allege that Chaney was taking nude photographs of a 16-year-old girl. The 14-year veteran of the Albion Department of Public Safety was named the department's officer of the year in May. Chaney appeared in an orange jail jumpsuit, with his hands and feet shackled. He is being held in the Barry County jail on \$500,000 bond. Webb asked to argue for a reduction of bond, but Durham said he would not consider any changes until after listening to testimony in the case. "That won't be heard before the exam," Durham said.

Trace Christenson covers crime and courts. He can be reached at 966-0685 or tchrist@battlecr.gannett.com.

Originally published August 30, 2005

Abuse charges dropped

Tuesday, August 30, 2005

The Grand Rapids Press

WYOMING -- Kent County prosecutors dropped the charges against a Wyoming couple who were to stand trial Monday, accused of second-degree child abuse. Micah Garcia, 30, and his wife, Ofelia Garcia, 23, were charged with a four-year felony after a 6-year-old girl in their care suffered scalding injuries to her legs. The Garcias maintained that the girl accidentally burned herself when she got into a hot bath tub. They were in the process of adopting the girl, a relative, and still await hearings in Kent County Family Court. The charges were "completely dismissed - outright," said defense attorney Damian Nunzio. "They were cleared of any and all criminal wrong-doing."

Official Says Siblings Were Split Up in Move From New Jersey Shelter

By TINA KELLEY
The New York Times

Published: August 30, 2005

State officials, racing to meet a deadline to empty a Trenton shelter for abused and neglected children, have defied the state's own guidelines by breaking up siblings and putting some children in homes that were far too temporary, the state's child advocate said yesterday. State caseworkers separated at least three pairs of siblings at the Trenton shelter this month, including one set of twins, said the child advocate, Kevin M. Ryan. Of the 30 young children moved out of that shelter this month, he said, at least five were moved into foster homes only to be moved again into other placements.

Under New Jersey's court-ordered child welfare reform plan, by Dec. 31, 2006, the state must stop using shelters and group homes for the youngest abused or neglected children who have been separated from their parents, and it must recruit more foster homes. But progress has been inadequate, Mr. Ryan said.

"We have got to stop dismantling components of the system before we have built an alternative safety net for children," he wrote in an e-mail message last week to state officials, others involved in the reforms and journalists.

Andy Williams, a spokesman for the Division of Youth and Family Services, said that on Wednesday, state officials and members of the child welfare reform panel would discuss how best to move children out of shelters.

"We would agree with the point we don't want to disrupt kids as we're trying to meet this requirement," Mr. Williams said. "We have made it clear to the staff that it's not something that should be done without a plan in place."

He said the state had recruited more foster families as part of the reform effort, but he could not say how many more were needed.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTICE OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES

TUESDAY, AUGUST 30

Senate Education, (Chr. Kuipers, 373-6920), Rm. 110 FB, 1 pm CANCELED
HB 4402 SPECIAL EDUCATION PERSONNEL(Hansen)Requires a background check on special education personnel employed by public schools.Full Text
HB 4928 TEACHER CRIMES(Palmer)Provides for changes in procedures for notification of teachers being convicted of certain offenses and escrow of salaries for teachers convicted of certain offenses.Full Text
HB 4930 TEACHER CRIMES(Elsenheimer)Sets reporting requirements for teacher convicted of certain crimes.Full Text
HB 4932 TEACHER CRIMES(Gaffney)Establishes student safety zones for teachers paroled after conviction of certain crimes.Full Text
HB 4991 TEACHER TENURE ACT(Emmons)Restricts teacher tenure act protection for teachers convicted of certain crimes.Full Text
SB 616 STUDENT SAFETY ZONE(Cassis)Establishes sentencing guidelines for crimes of living, working, or loitering in a student safety zone.Full Text
SB 617 STUDENT SAFETY ZONE(Toy)Establishes student safety zones.Full Text

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31

Senate Education, (Chr. Kuipers, 373-6920), Rm. 210 FB, 8 am
HB 4402 SPECIAL EDUCATION PERSONNEL(Hansen)Requires a background check on special education personnel employed by public schools.Full Text
HB 4928 TEACHER CRIMES(Palmer)Provides for changes in procedures for notification of teachers being convicted of certain offenses and escrow of salaries for teachers convicted of certain offenses.Full Text
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SB 616 STUDENT SAFETY ZONE(Cassis)Establishes sentencing guidelines for crimes of living, working, or loitering in a student safety zone.Full Text
SB 617 STUDENT SAFETY ZONE(Toy)Establishes student safety zones.Full Text

Program will offer infant daycare

Affordable service for working families

*By VANESSA McCRAV
Record-Eagle staff writer
August 29, 2005*

TRAVERSE CITY - A three-way partnership is giving wings to Angel Care, an infant daycare program designed to provide an affordable service for working families.

The Father Fred Foundation, St. Michael's Lutheran Church and the Angel Foundation are working to open a preschool and a new daycare center for young ones ages 3 months to 2½ years. Volunteers are repairing and remodeling an office supply store on Hastings Street to ready it for a fall opening.

"It is just going to be a marvelous thing," said pastor Timothy Brand of St. Michael's. The church will oversee the center's operations. Father Fred purchased the building, and the local Angel Foundation will assist with ongoing program support.

The idea for the center, which will provide care for 20 infants and 20 older preschoolers, began with baby-steps.

St. Michael's already runs a preschool and a smaller infant daycare operation, Brand said. "Every year we have tons and tons of calls for daycare, and mostly for infants," he said. "As I started really realizing this, we just kind of figured out that Traverse City was real lean on good infant daycare centers."

Working mother Yvonne Krajenka learned of the shortage when she began searching for a place for her son.

"I called ... five or six and there was either no opening, or they did not take him at that age," Krajenka said.

She was "extremely picky" while looking for the right center, and then she found St. Michael's. Her son started attending at the first of the year and has been "very happy," she said. The goal of the new center is to provide that opportunity to more parents, said Michael Shockley of Father Fred.

"(It's) a way to be pro-active in helping people so that they could get to work," he said. Volunteers, meanwhile, are working to remodel the building. Roofing materials were donated, and Springfield Roofing and Construction employees volunteered to install a new roof.

Brand said organizers are recruiting as much donated labor as possible to complete the project.

That will keep overhead lower and allow the center to offer reasonable rates for families, he said. Other proposed programs include parenting and financial planning classes and a Christian ministry outreach.

LOCAL COMMENT: Nation can't afford to cut food stamps

August 30, 2005

BY WENDELL N. GIBBS JR.

Children in our country are in danger of going hungry, and they need our help.

The scriptures of all three Abrahamic faiths repeatedly call on believers to feed the hungry and provide for those in need. In the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, there are more than 2,000 references commanding us to serve the poor. Temples, mosques, churches and charitable organizations have long done their part to help families in need, but our government has been, and must continue to be, a partner in the battle against hunger.

I am gravely concerned that if Congress and the administration have their way this fall, 300,000 of our brothers and sisters may lose a critical benefit: food stamps.

Last year, the Food Stamp Program provided sustenance to 24 million Americans every month, including 943,713 people in Michigan. More than half of all food stamp recipients are children, and 80% of food stamps go to families with children.

In Michigan alone, 352,333 children younger than 18 live in poverty and depend on this program for proper nutrition. Ask any teacher or physician about the connection between healthy eating and a child's mental, physical and spiritual growth. Healthy children are much more likely to grow up strong and pay attention in school, contributing to their communities and diminishing the burden on our health care system and social safety nets.

Children aren't the only beneficiaries of food stamps. One in five food stamp recipients is an elderly American who otherwise might have to choose between a healthy meal and medicine, rent, transportation or any number of other vital needs. The federal government estimates that every \$1 in food stamps generates nearly \$2 in economic activity. And last year, the Food Stamp Program brought \$896 million into Michigan's economy.

Some policy makers claim this program is rife with waste. But on June 24, Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns announced that the Food Stamp Program has achieved a payment accuracy rate of more than 94%. The program is more efficient and better managed than at anytime in its history. Our tax dollars are well spent.

Congress is considering cutting the Food Stamp Program, which experts estimate would eliminate 200,000 to 300,000 recipients. Some lobbyists and members of Congress support even more drastic cuts. In any event, if Congress passes budget legislation this fall -- called a "Budget Reconciliation Bill"--billions of dollars could be taken from the program. For a nation as wealthy as ours, this is simply immoral and unjust. We cannot let this happen.

As a bishop in the Episcopal Church, I believe that all people of good will are called to care for their fellow citizens in need. As Jesus told his disciples, "When you did it for the least of these, you did it for me."

All of us should contact our elected officials and urge them not to cut the Food Stamp Program and to vote against the "Budget Reconciliation Bill" if cuts are included. I have.

THE RT. REV. WENDELL GIBBS JR. is the bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan, which covers southeast and south-central Michigan. Write to him in care of the Free Press Editorial Page, 600 W. Fort St., Detroit, MI 48226.

*Published August 29, 2005
Lansing State Journal*

Gardeners grow rows for others

Area gardeners donated well over a ton of produce Sunday to help feed hungry people.

But the 2,763 pounds of tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, peppers, sweet corn, green beans, eggplant, carrots, cabbage and other vegetables dropped off at Van Atta's Greenhouse near Haslett and nine area L&L Food Centers, was far short of the goal set by organizers of the Greater Lansing Great Harvest project.

(ROBERT KILLIPS/Lansing State Journal)

Fresh produce: Ronda Liskey, of Van Atta's Greenhouse and Flower Shop, sorts produce Sunday that was donated as part of the "Grow a Row" campaign. Donors brought 506 pounds of produce in about the first hour. The next "Grow a Row" drop-off is noon to 3 p.m. Sept. 11 at Van Atta's and L&L Food Centers.

"We aren't yet at half of our goal of 10,000 pounds, but we have another collection on Sept. 11, and we think that will be pretty bountiful," said project spokeswoman Ronda Liskey of Van Atta's.

Advertisement

"This is still a little early. By Sept. 11, people will be clearing their gardens and will be tired of canning and may be looking for something to do with the extra produce."

The vegetables are donated to the Food Movers, a division of the Greater Lansing Food Bank, and will be distributed to area senior centers, shelters and soup kitchens. More than 16,000 pounds of fresh produce was collected in the first three years of the project.

"I tend to grow too much for my family," said Tom Loniewski of Laingsburg as he dropped off 37 pounds of corn, squash and other vegetables. "This is a good cause and also a way to teach my two sons how to give back a little to their community."

- From Staff writer Hugh Leach
-

Published August 30, 2005

Local news briefs

Shelter to stay open - for now

Volunteers of America Michigan said Monday it has raised enough money to keep the New Hope Day Center open through September.

The shelter, at 430 North Larch St., serves about 100 homeless people a day. It was set to close earlier this year after a 40 percent drop in revenue from car donations - its largest income source. Fundraising efforts will continue as the program hopes to raise \$70,000 to supplement funds that the city of Lansing is providing to keep New Hope open during the cold weather months.

About \$10,000 already has been raised toward that goal. UAW Local 602 and Guardian Auto Glass are planning charity golf events this fall.

Shelter officials are hoping the funding gap is a one-time problem - the program likely will be fully funded by a federal grant starting the fiscal year of July 1, 2006.

The Kalamazoo Gazette

August 29, 2005

Restaurants can make own rules

I wish to respond to Larry Harron's Aug. 22 Viewpoint, "More must be done to solve homeless problems," by saying I agree that both sides on this issue have work to do. However, he chose to place most of the blame solely on the McDonald's restaurant. Nor did he say what the Kalamazoo Homeless Action Network should do to help solve the problem.

While I believe restaurants should not label customers by appearance, etc., I also believe they have a right to make their own rules and set their own dress codes. Simply put, McDonald's is a business. It was never intended to be a shelter or place to hang out all day. Their purpose is to sell food to the public; nothing more, nothing less.

So instead of pointing the finger in one direction, the Homeless Action Network group needs to find other alternatives and better places for these people to go to. Making McDonald's the scapegoat here will not solve the problem of homelessness in our community.

Duane L. Foote

Kalamazoo

Detroit News
Livingston Briefs
8/30/2005

Brighton

Expo to explain health care services

Seniors and family members with questions about Medicare and Medicaid services are invited to attend a health care expo Wednesday in Brighton. It will feature experts and health professionals that will explain the new prescription drug benefit system, provide health screenings and educational materials.

The expo will be held from 9-11 a.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 300 East Grand River. For information, call (517) 702-8000.

The Grand Rapids Press

Letters

August 30, 2005

Draining the funds

Are all these immigrants being made American citizens entitled to our Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid when the time comes? If so, how are we going to support all this?

All three benefits will be in trouble for years to come. Are people who have been here for years to suffer later? What will the U.S. do with everyone hopping on the bandwagon?

MARY WIGDA/Grand Rapids

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

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NEWS RELEASE:

For Immediate Release

August 17, 2005

COURT CAUTIONS PUBLIC OF POSSIBLE IDENTITY THEFT SCAM

Chief Judge Bernard A. Friedman announced today that the Court has been advised of a nationwide scam in which citizens receive a telephone call from an individual claiming to be with a court. The caller indicates that a bench warrant has been issued for the arrest of the citizen for failure to appear for jury duty. The caller then asks the citizen to verify certain personal information, i.e., social security number, by providing that information.

In federal court, potential jurors are summoned through the mail and told when to report for jury duty. If a phone call is made to a potential juror, personal information is not requested because the Court already has that information. In addition, jurors who fail to appear are not advised over the telephone that a bench warrant has been issued. The warrant, once signed by the judicial officer, is executed in person by the United States Marshals Service.

Chief Judge Friedman cautions the public from providing the personal information requested in these calls. He also suggests, if you receive one of these calls, that you call 313-234-2619 and leave your name, telephone number and a detailed description of the call you received.

Any information provided will be turned over to the United States Attorney's Office, which will determine whether further action is warranted.



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR

News Advisory

Contact: Stepheni Schlinker (517) 373-7394

Northern Michigan Counties Announce New Approach to Child Welfare *"Family to Family" Initiative to be Introduced*

WHAT: Department of Human Services offices in northern Michigan counties have come together to host a media event to announce a new approach to the child welfare system called Family to Family. Family to Family is a partnership between local Department of Human Services offices and the community to reduce disruption in the lives of at-risk children living in northern Michigan counties by strengthening resources for serving children within their homes, or foster homes within their own communities. This approach ensures that birth parents, foster parents and community representatives are involved in the decision-making process concerning the placement and service needs of at-risk children. Northern counties included in this initiative include: Alcona, Alpena, Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Crawford, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Iosco, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Mackinac, Manistee, Missaukee, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Otsego, Presque Isle, Roscommon and Wexford.

Learn more about this innovative initiative from a panel of experts as well as parents and children who have been involved in the child welfare system.

WHEN: Wednesday, August 31, 2005
11:00 a.m.

WHERE: Northwestern Michigan College Great Lakes Maritime Academy – Hagerty Center
715 E. Front St.
Traverse City, MI 49686

WHO: Speakers at this event include:
Tom Schwarz, Department of Human Services Zone 2 director
Marianne Udow, Department of Human Services director
Jim Scherrer, executive director, NW Michigan Child and Family Services
Kathie Walters, foster parent
Parent currently involved in the child welfare system
Bill Memberto, family services director, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians
Former foster children (now adults), Jim Casey Youth Initiative
Honorable David L. Stowe, Family Division, Grand Traverse County Probate Court
Mary L. Mariois, director, Grand Traverse County Department of Human Services

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